And so 'scape hanging : trust not the physician ; His antidotes are poison, and he slays More than you rob : take wealth and lives together; Do villainy, do, since you profess to do't[9], Like workmen.
I'll example you with thievery: The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief, And her pale fire she snatches from the sun: The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves The moon into salt tears [1]: the earth's a thief,

9 —since you PROFESS to do't,] The old copy has —protest. The correction was made by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

[1] The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
The MOON into salt tears:] The *moon is* supposed to be humid, and perhaps a source of humidity, but cannot be *resolved* by the *surges* of the sea. Yet I think *moon* is the true reading. Here is a circulation of thievery described: The sun, moon, and sea, all rob, and are robbed. JOHNSON.

He says simply, that the *sun,* the *moon,* and the *sea,* rob one another by turns, but the *earth* robs them all: the sea, i. e. *liquid surge,* by supplying the *moon* with moisture, robs her in turn of the *soft* tears of *dew* which the poets always fetch from this planet. *Soft* for *salt* is an easy change. In this sense Milton speaks *of her moist continent.* Paradise Lost, book,v. 1. 4-22. And, in Hamlet, Horatio says:

«---------the *moist* star
" Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands.[1]"

STEEVENS.

We are not to attend on such occasions merely to philosophical truth; we are to consider what might have been the received or vulgar notions of the time.—The populace, in the days of Shak-speare, might possibly have considered the waining of the moon as a gradual dissolution of it, and have attributed -to this melting of the moon, the increase of the sea at the time she disappears, They might, it is true, behold, that there is a similar increase in the tides when the moon becomes full; but when popular notions are once established, the reasons urged against them are but little attended to. It may also be observed, that the moon, when viewed through a telescope^ has a humid appearance, and seems to have drops of water suspended from the rim of it; to which circumstance Shakspeare probably alludes in Macbeth where Hecate says:

" Upon the corner of the *moon*
" There hangs a *vaporous* drop/* &c. M. MASON,